

Valentine Weaver House (Robacker House)
North side of River Rd. (LR45012), 2.5
miles northeast of Shawnee on Delaware
Shawnee on Delaware vicinity, Smithfield
Township
Monroe County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1164

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. PA-1164

VALENTINE WEAVER HOUSE
(Robacker House)

Location: North side of River Road (LR45012), 1 mile southwest of Township Line, 2.5 miles northeast of Shawnee on Delaware, in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Shawnee on Delaware vicinity, Smithfield Township, Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Bushkill Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.494320.4541370.

Present Owner: United States Government.

Present Use: Demolished after 1970.

Significance: Built in 1867, this large stone building was intended for an inn to serve loggers. However, Mr. Weaver was unable to procure a tavern license, and the tap room became a kitchen. The house exhibits the formalism and openness of post civil war architecture in the Delaware Water Gap area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1867, inscribed on date stone.
2. Original and subsequent owners: This is an incomplete chain of title found in the records of the Monroe County Court House, Stroudsburg, Pa.

1845 Deed: 4 April 1845
Volume 3, page 102
George Barns
to
Valentine Weaver of Lower Mt. Bethel Township, Northampton County, Pa.

The property contained 101 acres and 100 perches, the consideration was for \$2200.

1876 Deed: 15 March 1876
Volume 25, page 262.
Valentine Weaver died intestate on March 21, 1875 and the property was conveyed to his sons, Josiah, Urias and Eastburn Weaver. The farm then consisted of 90 and 3/4 acres.

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- 1879 Deed: 2 January 1879
Volume 28, p 111
Josiah Weaver
to
George A. Michaels of Smithfield Township
The farm contained 91 acres (75 acres cleared, 5 acres meadow and the balance in timber land) and sold for \$3,200.00.
- 1913 Deed: 11 February 1913
Volume 43, page 693
George A. Michaels
to
Lewis B. Custer of McKeesport, Alleghany County, Pa.
Two tracts were conveyed: (1) contained 1 ¹/₄ acres which Christian Kautz and wife, May 2, 1893 conveyed to George A. Michael (Vol. 43, p 693, Stroudsburg); (2) contained 91 acres excepting ¹/₂ acres which George A. Michaels and wife Sept. 14, 1888 conveyed to the School District of Smithfield (Vol. 1 38, p 453). The consideration for the above two tracts was \$6,000.
- 1916 Deed: 2 September 1916
Vol. 77, page 540
Lewis B. Custer and Clara H. Custer of Mt. Vernon New York.
to
American Construction and Securities Company of Delaware.
Conveyed the tracts as listed above.
- 1941 Deed: 21 January 1941
Volume 136, page 438
American Water Works Construction Company (formerly American Construction and Securities Company)
to
Frank LeBar and Grace LeBar of Stroudsburg, Pa.
Tract (1) contained 1 ¹/₄ acres; (2) contained 90 and 3/4 acres.
- 1941 Deed: 12 August 1941
Volume 138 pages, 174 and 258.
Frank LeBar and Grace LeBar
to
Earl F. Robacker and Ada F. Robacker of White Plains, New York.
The property contained 13 and 6/10 acres and the stone dwelling house erected in 1867 stood on this portion of the property.

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3. Original plan and construction: Built in 1867, this large stone building was meant to be a inn, with large rooms convertible by folding doors. The large room on the back of the house was meant to be the drinking room; however, the house was never used as an inn. The house exhibits the formalism and openness of post civil war architecture in the Delaware Water Gap area.
4. Alterations and additions: For fifteen years between 1941-1956, the house underwent numerous alterations on the interior and exterior. The modernization of the interior included the installation of plumbing and the addition of a bath on the second floor, electric lights, fireplaces built in the living room and master bedroom, a Granville stone floor and pine paneling was added in the dining room in the ell, and central heating ducts were placed throughout the house.

On the exterior, a new front porch and porch on the ell were added, the exterior stone chimney on the southwest wall was constructed and the barn in from of the house was removed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Valentine Weaver and his wife, Sabina, purchased over 90 acres of land and lived in a log structure formerly located east of the present dwelling. Noted in the lower Smithfield Township census of 1850, 1860 and 1870, Valentine cleared the land and established a prosperous farm.

The stone house was erected in 1867, the year of the birth of the youngest child, Sabina Elizabeth Weaver. Valentine died intestate in 1875 and the property was conveyed to his three sons a year later.

The farm remained in the family until 1879, at which time it contained a stone dwelling house 20 by 33 feet, two-and-a-half stories high; kitchen 22 by 32 feet and one-and-a-half stories high; a barn 25 by 50 feet; a wagon shed 22 x 22 feet; a hog pen, corn crib and other outbuildings. Also, a spring of water near the house and barn, apple orchard and other fruit trees and a limestone quarry on the premises, and a good shad fishery on the Delaware.

The old school house located northeast of the house, fell into a state of disuse after 1888 when a new school house was built.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography

a. Primary and secondary sources:

Census - 1850, 1860, and 1870 - National Archives,
Washington, D.C.

Interview with Mrs. Martin V. B. Walters. circa 1940.

Interview with Dayton W. Frankenfield, grandson of
Valentine Weaver, 1958.

Office of Deeds and Wills and office of Orphans' Court,
Easton Court House, Northampton Co., Pa.

Office of Recorder of Wills and Deeds and office of
Prothonotary, Court House, Stroudsburg, Pa.

Zion Lutheran Cemetery Inscriptions, Middle Smithfield
Township, Monroe County, Pa. (Monroe County
Historical Society, Stroudsburg, Pa.)

b. Secondary and published sources:

Atlas of Monroe County, Pa. F. W. Beers, published
1875, New York, p 76.

Mathews, Alfred, History of Wayne, Pike and Monroe
Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Pa., 1886. p
1090.

Prepared by Elizabeth O. Walters
Historian
Monroe County Historical Society
August 1968.
and
William C. Badger
Project Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
August, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

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1. Architectural character: The importance of the house lies primarily in its contrast with stone houses built before the civil war period. While the same basic materials were used in earlier stone houses (cf. Peter Treible House, PA-1161) the builders of this house yielded to current influences, especially in the use of symmetry around the entry hall and by the use of larger doorways and windows. The old custom of adding rooms onto the basic unit is evident here.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good. The original floor boards, base moldings, decorative trim pieces, and stairway are in place.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The two-and-one-half story front part of the house is approximately 33'-5" x 27' 4" (excluding the back room). The one-and-one-half story back room is off center with the axis of the house, and is in line with the west-end wall of the house, forming an ell. Dimensions of the back room are approximately 18'-10" (along the west wall) x 21'-8". The front is three bays, two stories and attic; the ell is two bays along the west side and has one story and an attic (loft) space.
2. Foundations: Rubble limestone and sandstone.
3. Wall construction: Both the main house and the ell are built of rubble limestone and sandstone, with cut corner blocks. First-floor walls which face onto the corner back porch have been stuccoed.
4. Framing: Sawn beams bearing on stone walls; framing in the main house is north to south, framing in the ell is east to west.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: A wooden three-bay porch extends across the south (front) side of the house. The columns support a shed roof covered with tar paper: flat arches span between the columns, and there are six steps up from the ground. The porch ceiling is 2 1/2" beaded board, running east to west. Another similar porch is on the back of the house, occupying the remaining portion of the ell. This porch has no ceiling.

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A covered accessway to the basement is located on the west side of the main house; basement level is three risers down. The first floor level is one riser up from the porches.

6. Chimneys: Although there are three chimneys located at each gable side of the house, only the fireplace in the ell is original. Originally the main house was heated by wood-burning stoves. The large chimney on the west side is stone above the roof; the other two are brick.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The wide front door is flanked on each side by four vertical lights, and has an eleven-light hinged transom above. The door itself is decorated with four octagonal panels. The stone sill is one riser up from the porch. The back doorway of the main house is very simple, and has a four-light window over the wooden panels. The doorway to the ell is a four-panel solid door similar to the interior type; the threshold is poured concrete, slightly elevated above the porch.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There are no shutters on the house. All windows are six-over-six light, wide, and have labels (small pediment) above them. Much of the glass is original. One three-light and six-light window pierces the foundation to light the basement.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Slate-covered gable roof of approximately 30° pitch had ridge parallel with front. The gable over the ell was also slate covered and had its axis perpendicular to the front.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: A very broad cornice of simple molding design is located under the eaves of both parts of the house; this cornice returns on the gable ends. There are no gutters.
 - c. Dormers: There are two on the west side of the ell, lighting the loft. The windows are nine light.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

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- a. First floor: Center hall, approximately 5'-8" wide, contains an open stair with a turned walnut newel post and balusters. The living room to the west is approximately 23'-6" x 11'-10" and had folding doors across the width of the room, 12' from the front wall. The doors were intended to divide this large room to accommodate guests of the inn. Two rooms lie to the east of the entry hall; presently a den, and the kitchen. These rooms are roughly the same size, both 11'-6" square. A doorway connects the two rooms and the kitchen has a doorway onto the back hall and another onto the back porch. A 5'-8" back hall connects rooms the rear rooms of the house. From this back hall a straight-run stairway leads to the basement. To the rear of the house is a room measuring 13'-2" x 17'-3", and has been panelled recently. The north wall of the room has an original fireplace, a closed winder stair, and two closets. The fireplace can be closed by use of hinged doors. The winder stair leads up to the loft space. This room also has a doorway to the back porch, although it appears to be recent. Ceiling height of the first floor is 7'-11".
 - b. Second floor: The main stairway from the entry hall has a landing before it reaches the second floor level and from this landing, steps lead up to the loft, and continue up six risers to the second floor. The master bedroom is to the west of the upper hall, and has a recent corner fireplace and a closet. The bathroom is small, and also is on the west side. Formerly, these two rooms were probably equal in size, as they would have been used as guest bedrooms. To the east of the upper hall are two bedrooms. According to the present owners, these two rooms were originally one large space with a series of folding doors, as the large room on the first floor once had. From the upper hall, a closed straight-run stairway leads to the attic. The loft is an unfinished room above rear room on the first floor and is connected by the winder stair. The loft has two dormers on the west side.
 - c. Attic: The attic is unfinished in the main portion, and has four six-over-six windows. There is a low stairway wall in center and back.
2. Stairways: There are two locations of vertical circulation in the house: the main stairway in the center of the main house and the winder stair in the north wall of rear room. The main stairway leads from the first floor eleven risers to a landing, then reverses three more risers to the second floor level. From

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the landing, the loft is two steep risers up; the loft is three normal risers to the north.

The main stairway has an interesting spliced walnut railing, with turned walnut balusters and newel post. From the second floor hall, a closed straight-run stair leads twelve risers to the attic. The stairway arrives at the center-back of the attic floor, and has a low wall surrounding it. Eleven risers lead from the back hall of first floor to the basement. The winder stairway is located in the board wall to the left of the fireplace in the rear room and leads up twelve risers to the unfinished loft space.

3. Flooring: Pine floors of wide varied boards are in the main house; a modern slate floor has replaced the original board floor in the rear room. Originally the beams beneath the board floor rested directly on the ground, and became decomposed in the wet climate. Flooring generally runs east to west except in the first and second floor hallways where floor boards run north to south to recognize the function of entry. Special floor framing visible in the basement allows the hallway boards to run opposite to the other floor. The floor boards vary 5"-7" in hallways, 7"-10" in other rooms.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wall finish in the basement is a light coat of plaster over rubble stone. On the first floor, the kitchen has vertical beaded board paneling, painted white. The rear room has been recently paneled with natural pine with an air space to reduce moisture in the room. All other rooms have plaster walls, painted white. Ceilings are plaster: The rear room has acoustical tile applied to the ceiling. In the attic of the main house, the stone walls are stuccoed up 2 1/2' from the floor, and support a 8"x12" wood plate, mortised to receive square rafters. The present rafters are round, and are not pegged at the ridge, which suggest that they have been replaced. A 6"x6" beam supports the rafters paralld to the front wall, and is supported in turn by posts directly above the hallway walls. These posts are pegged into the sill plate for lateral stability. The large beams are hewn.
5. Doorways and doors: The front doorway is 3' wide, flanked by two vertical glass panels, four lights each. An eleven-light hinged transom extends across the top of the doorway. The doorway from the entry hall into the large room has been widened by the present owners; a closet has been put in at the base of the stairway. The original interior doorway openings are 2'-6" wide, and are typically four-panel solid doors, with molding applied to important sides. The large room used to be divided into two

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parts by use of folding panel doors, 2'-6" wide, now stored in the attic. These doors were of the same design as the other interior doors, and floor markings indicate floor locks approximately 12' from the front wall. According to the present owners, the two bedrooms above the large room were originally one space with such folding doors.

6. Decorative features and trim: Base moldings are large and simple; there are no chair rails in the house. Windows are wide (2'-9" opening) and are splayed and paneled on the interior.
7. Notable hardware: Cast-iron box lock with white ceramic knob is typical of the original hardware. The wall hardware in the rear room is a cast-iron lift latch. Hinges on the basement door are simple short strap.
8. Lighting: Before the present owners occupied the house, lighting was of other than electrical means. At present, fixtures are electric floor or table lamps.
9. Heating: Original stove flues were vented through the chimneys, as can be seen on the interior of the attic, west end. The fireplace now in the house were the addition of the present owners, with the exception of the large fireplace in the rear room, which is original. The house is now occupied for central heating, although the furnace has not been installed. Baseboard registers are throughout the house.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faced south, very close to the road, on a steep hill on the north side of the road. It is in an area of the valley where the houses are widely spaced along the road. A dense forest covers the hill behind the house.
2. Enclosures, walks: The walks are slabs of slate, set into the lawn.
3. Outbuildings: There are two other smaller buildings on the property to the east of the house, and slightly higher on the hill. The overall dimensions are 18'x24'. This building, with stone foundations and German siding painted red, contains an enormous fireplace probably used for cooking and washing. The present use is that of storage. Above this red building and slightly to the east is a stone foundation (20'x20') which is thought to have been the former Walters school house. This building predates the stone school house which was built in 1888. Traces of a road ran up from River Road to the east of the complex and into the forests.

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Prepared by Kenneth N. Clark
Project supervisor, HABS
National Park Service
2 August 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1969 under the direction of Kenneth N. Clark (University of Arizona), Project Supervisor, by student assistant architects Andrei T. Banks (Howard University), Gary W. Kreger (University of Virginia), and John R. Naughton (University of Illinois) in the HABS field office at Bangor, Pennsylvania in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by Elizabeth D. Walters, historian with the Monroe County Historical Society in 1968, and, project historian, William C. Badger in 1970. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by Unknown in N.D.